

Saddleback Ledge Lighthouse
On Saddleback Ledge in Penobscot Bay
between Vinal Haven and Isle Au Haut
Rockland Vicinity
Knox County
Maine

HABS No. ME-79

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

SADDLEBACK LEDGE LIGHTHOUSE

Location: On Saddleback Ledge in Penobscot Bay between Vinal Haven and Isle Au Haut, Rockland Vicinity, Knox County, Maine

Present Owner: United States Coast Guard, First District, Boston, Massachusetts

Present Use: Lighthouse, now operated remotely

Brief Statement of Significance: This structure, built in 1839, is an outstanding example of the lighthouses built on the New England coast.

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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owner: United States Government.
2. Date of erection: The site was recommended by Captain Joseph Smith, United States Navy, to Commodore Isaac Chauncey in 1837. Chauncey visited the site on December 15, 1837, and reported favorably on it, and the light was built in 1839. The property was acquired by the United States by deed dated August 5, 1837, from George W. Coffin, Land Agent for Massachusetts, and John Hodgdon, Land Agent for Maine.
3. Notes on alterations and additions: Original reflector apparatus replaced in 1855 by a Fresnel lens. Landing derrick erected 1885. In 1887 a pyramidal skeleton tower was erected for the 1000-pound bell; tower later destroyed by storms.
4. Source of information: Malcolm F. Willoughby, Lighthouses of New England (Boston: T. O. Metcalf Company, 1929), pages 97-100, illustration facing page 96.

B. Supplemental Information:

1. The following, from a report of Atlantic Coast Lighthouses prepared by I. W. P. Lewis in 1842, is quoted in Willoughby, Lighthouses of New England, pages 99-100:

"... Saddleback light-house . . . is the only establishment on the coast of Maine that possesses any claim whatever to superiority, in respect to material or detail over its fellows . . . The tower contains four compartments for the use of the keeper, but no convenience for

collecting fresh water, nor any means of securing the boat - both important omissions. However, the cost of the work was but \$15,000, and it is the most economical and durable structure that came under my observation during the survey, and what is worthy of special remark, the only one ever erected in New England by an 'architect and engineer'."

2. The following is a transcription of a report in the United States Coast Guard First District Office, Boston, Massachusetts:

---First----- DISTRICT.

Department of Commerce and Labor

Light-House Establishment

DESCRIPTION OF LIGHT-HOUSE TOWER, BUILDINGS, AND PREMISES

AT

Saddleback Ledge Light-Station, Maine.

-----April 21, 1908.-----

NAME AND POSITION OF THE LIGHT-HOUSE AND LIGHT-STATION.

Saddleback Ledge: On Saddleback Ledge, Me., about 3 miles westerly from Western Head, Isle au Haut, and in the westerly side of the main entrance to Isle au Haut Bay, the southerly entrance to East Penobscot Bay.

1. BY WHOM DESCRIBED, Lieut. Col. Edw. Bun, U.S.A. Engineer First Light-House District.
2. DATE OF DESCRIPTION, April 21, 1908.
3. DISTINGUISHING CHARACTER OF LIGHT OR LIGHTS, Fixed white.
4. LATITUDE OF TOWER, 44 00' 52" N.) AUTHORITY, U. S. Coast
) and Geodetic Survey
5. LONGITUDE OF TOWER, 68 43' 37" W.) Chart No. 309.

PREMISES - A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF, EMBRACING -

6. SITE OF STATION - PUBLIC LAND, PURCHASE, MILITARY OR NAVAL
RESERVATION, LEASE: Purchase.
7. DATE OF RESERVATION,
8. DATE OF DEED, 5 Aug 1837

9. DATE OF PERMISSION TO OCCUPY,
10. DATE OF LEASE,
11. AREA OF THE ENTIRE SITE, 1 acre, more or less
12. AREA INCLOSED, None
13. CHARACTER OF SURFACE SOIL, Ledge.
14. DISTANCE OF TOWER FROM NEAREST HIGH-WATER MARK, 20 ft
15. INCLOSURES TO PREMISES, None.
16. WHARF OR LANDING ON PREMISES, Boat slip.
17. ROAD TO LANDING OR WHARF, CHARACTER OF, AND DISTANCE FROM TOWER,
18. MEANS BY WHICH THE LIGHT-STATION MAY BE REACHED, Boat.
19. DISTANCE TO THE NEAREST PUBLIC ROAD, RAILROAD STATION, OR STEAMBOAT LANDING, AND TO WHICH: 4 miles - Public road at Roberts Harbor, Me. Steamboat landing Vinalhaven - 6 miles.
20. DISTANCE TO THE NEAREST POST-OFFICE, 6 miles Vinalhaven, Me.
21. DISTANCE TO THE NEAREST VILLAGE OR TOWN, 6 " " "
22. FACILITIES FOR REACHING THE LIGHT-STATION BY PUBLIC CONVEYANCE, None.
23. FACILITIES FOR REACHING THE LIGHT-STATION BY PRIVATE CONVEYANCE FROM THE NEAREST VILLAGE, TOWN, RAILROAD STATION OR STEAMBOAT LANDING, AND THE DISTANCE: Boat from Vinalhaven, 6 miles.
24. TOWER OR OTHER MEANS USED FOR SUPPORTING THE LANTERN AND APPARATUS, Tower.
25. NUMBER OF SEPARATE LIGHTS, One.
26. WHEN FIRST BUILT OR ESTABLISHED, 1839
27. WHEN LAST THOROUGHLY REBUILT, REPAIRED, OR RENOVATED,
28. CONDITION AT THIS DATE, Good
29. SHAPE OF TOWER IN PLAN, Circular
30. FORM OF TOWER, CYLINDRICAL, CONICAL, OR PYRAMIDAL, Conical
31. HEIGHT OF TOWER FROM BASE TO VENTILATOR BALL OF LANTERN, 43 ft
32. HEIGHT OF FOCAL PLANE OF LANTERN ABOVE MEAN HIGH WATER (ON SEA AND GULF COASTS) OR MEAN LAKE LEVEL ON NORTHERN LAKES AND RIVERS: 36 ft.
33. BACKGROUND OF THE LIGHT-HOUSE, UPON WHICH IT IS PROJECTED, AS SEEN FROM THE SEA OR LAKE: Sky.

34. COLOR OF TOWER, Gray granite
35. COLOR OF TOWER, HOW PRODUCED: Natural color.
36. TOWER--CONNECTED WITH KEEPER'S DWELLING, AND HOW, OR DETACHED: Connected.
37. OBJECT--SEACOAST, LAKE COAST, BAY, HARBOR, CHANNEL, OR RANGE; FOR GENERAL OR LOCAL NAVIGATING PURPOSES: Second seacoast.
38. MATERIALS OF WHICH THE TOWER IS BUILT: Granite and cement.
39. GENERAL DESCRIPTION, EMBRACING--
40. THICKNESS OF WALLS AT BASE, 2 1/2 ft.
41. THICKNESS OF WALLS AT PARAPET, 20 in.
42. DIAMETER OF TOWER (INSCRIBED, IF POLYGONAL) AT BASE, 19 ft (inside)
43. DIAMETER OF TOWER (INSCRIBED, IF POLYGONAL) AT PARAPET, 9 ft. 8 in.
44. KIND OF STAIRWAY AND STEPS, Wooden.
45. NUMBER OF LANDINGS OF STAIRWAY, 2.
46. SIZE OF GLASS FOR GLAZING TOWER WINDOWS, 8" x 12" and 9 3/4" x 11 1/2"
47. NUMBER OF WINDOWS IN TOWER, AND SIZE OF SASH, 10 - 22" x 23" and 28" x 27"
48. NUMBER OF DOORS, 6.
49. KIND OF FOUNDATION AND DEPTH BELOW THE SURFACE, Ledge.
50. CHARACTER OF SOIL AT AND SURROUNDING THE LIGHT-HOUSE, Ledge.
51. SOIL SUSCEPTIBLE OF BEING PROTECTED BY GRASS, SHRUBBERY, OR TREES: No.
52. MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS UPON TOWER AND SITE:

LANTERN AND LANTERN FIXTURES

53. ORDER OR CLASS OF LANTERN, 4th Order.
54. POLYGONAL OR CYLINDRICAL, Polygonal
55. DIAMETER, INSCRIBED, TO GLASS, 7 ft.
56. NUMBER OF SIDES IN PLAN, 10.
57. VERTICAL OR HELICAL BARS, Vertical.
58. HEIGHT GLAZED, 36".

59. NUMBER OF PLATES IN HEIGHT, 1.
60. NUMBER OF PLATES IN EACH SIDE, 1.
61. THICKNESS OF PLATES, 1/4".
62. SIZE OF DIFFERENT PLATES, 26 7/8" x 35 5/8".
63. NUMBER OF STORM PANES OF GLASS, None.
64. UNGLAZED SIDE OF LANTERN IN PLATES AND DEGREES OF ARC, ; BETWEEN
WHAT BEARINGS (MAGNETIC AND FROM SEAWARD),
65. MATERIALS OF WHICH THE LANTERN IS CONSTRUCTED, Iron
66. ROOF, Iron with pitched roof.
67. VENTILATOR BALL, Iron.
68. LIGHTNING-CONDUCTOR SPINDLE, Copper.
69. LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR, OF WHAT MATERIAL; HOW ATTACHED TO SPINDLE; HOW
LED, AND HOW FAR BELOW THE SURFACE OF DRY EARTH, OR OTHERWISE,
AS THE CASE MAY BE: Copper ribbon from gallery led down outside
tin along ledge into water.
70. BALUSTRADE AND OUTSIDE GALLERY, 2 flat rails with ten ball top posts.
71. LANTERN DOORS, AND HOW FITTED: One wooden door and one iron door
fitted with brass hinge and latch.
72. FLOOR OF LANTERN--OF WHAT MATERIALS: Stone.
73. WATCHROOM DOOR LEADING INTO THE LANTERN, AND HOW FITTED: Wooden trap
door.
74. PARAPET, INSIDE DIAMETER (INSCRIBED, IF POLYGONAL), 7" 6"

VENTILATORS.

75. IN PARAPET, WALL, OR LOWER PART OF LANTERN: Parapet.
76. LANTERN LADDERS FOR CLEANING PLATE GLASS, OUTSIDE: None.
77. CURTAIN HOOKS INSIDE OF LANTERN--HOW FITTED: Wire hooks held by screws.

WATCHROOM.

78. HOW FITTED: Shelf and closet.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This granite lighthouse tower is an outstanding example of the lighthouses built on the New England coast.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions:
Lighthouse - 26'-0" ft. dia. at base - 5 stories high
Boathouse - 16'-7-1/2" x 30'-6" - 2 stories
2. Foundations: Bed rock.
3. Wall construction:
Lighthouse - Bearing granite masonry.
Boathouse - Light wood frame covered with horizontal wood clapboards. Iron braces on east elevation.
4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Porch, breakwater, and boat ramp all wood; steel ladder on east side of lighthouse up to window.
5. Chimneys: One brick chimney in boathouse with metal flue extension and metal braces and collar.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Boathouse door - solid wood, two piece, sliding door. Main entry - three panel, four lights, wood door. No exterior doors in lighthouse tower.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Boathouse - Six over six, double hung wood sash, all boarded up. Lighthouse - Four lights, swinging wood sash; two piece, solid wood storm shutters.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Boathouse--Wood shingle, gable roof. Lighthouse--Flat, steel-covered roof over granite cantilevered from shaft.
 - b. Cornice: Simple wood cornice and gutter on boathouse.
 - c. Dormers, cupolas: Ten-sided light-tower--steel exterior below glass.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: One room per floor in lighthouse. Boathouse on first floor of frame building, two rooms on second floor.
2. Stairways: Closed circular wood stairway in lighthouse. Iron ladder from fourth to fifth floors in lighthouse. Circular granite steps from boathouse to lighthouse.
3. Flooring: Modern tongue and groove flooring (2-1/2").
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All rooms--painted plaster walls and ceilings.
5. Doorways and doors: All wood, four panel. Those in lighthouse cut to accommodate shape of room. A few original doors remain--Greek Revival trim.
6. Trim: Simple wood baseboard and window-door moldings.
7. Hardware: All modern.
8. Lighting: None. Storage battery system for rotating beacon (automatic).
9. Heating: None.

D. Site:

1. Orientation and general setting: Lighthouse and boathouse orientated north-south; set on rock outcropping in the Penobscot Bay.
2. Enclosure: Wood breakwater paralleling east elevation, heavy timber construction.
3. Walks, driveways, etc.: Boat ramp of heavy timber construction.

Prepared by Russell V. Keune, Architect
National Park Service
August 1960

Saddleback Ledge Lighthouse
Rockland Vicinity
Knox County
Maine

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

Addendum to:

SADDLEBACK LEDGE LIGHTHOUSE

Penobscot Bay

~~Vinalhaven vicinity~~ ROCKLAND VICINITY

Knox County

Maine

HABS No. ME-79

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HABS No. ME-79
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